

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICENATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS**1 NAME**

HISTORIC

Chatol, F. Gano Chance House

AND/OR COMMON

Chance Guest House

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

543 South Jefferson Street

CITY, TOWN

Centralia

VICINITY OF

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

#8 - Hon. Richard H. Ichord

STATE

Missouri

CODE

029

COUNTY

Boone

CODE

019

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

___DISTRICT

☒ BUILDING(S)

___STRUCTURE

___SITE

___OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

___PUBLIC

☒ PRIVATE

___BOTH

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

___IN PROCESS

___BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

☒ OCCUPIED

___UNOCCUPIED

___WORK IN PROGRESS

ACCESSIBLE

☒ YES: RESTRICTED

___YES: UNRESTRICTED

___NO

PRESENT USE

___AGRICULTURE

___COMMERCIAL

___EDUCATIONAL

___ENTERTAINMENT

___GOVERNMENT

___INDUSTRIAL

___MILITARY

___MUSEUM

___PARK

___PRIVATE RESIDENCE

___RELIGIOUS

___SCIENTIFIC

___TRANSPORTATION

☒ OTHER: Guest house**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

for local c

NAME

A.B. Chance Co.

STREET & NUMBER

210 North Allen

CITY, TOWN

Centralia

VICINITY OF

Missouri 65240

STATE

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTIONCOURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

City-County Building, Office of Recorder of Deeds

STREET & NUMBER

709 East Broadway

CITY, TOWN

Columbia

Missouri 65201

STATE

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Missouri State Historical Survey

DATE

1978

___FEDERAL ☒ STATE ___COUNTY ___LOCALDEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDSDepartment of Natural Resources
Office of Historic Preservation

CITY, TOWN

Jefferson City

Missouri 65102

STATE

DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Chatol, the F. Gano Chance House in Centralia, Missouri is a large, two-story residence, U-shaped in plan, with a basement. It is constructed in a variation of the International Style which has come to be known as the Depression Modern Style.¹

STRUCTURE

Chatol measures approximately 136' along its east and west sides and 92' along the north and south at its widest points. "Its walls are constructed of metal lath over wooden studs with plaster on the interior and exterior. The house rests on steel footings, 2' high and 1' wide, which are grooved to receive the structure above. These footings are called "snowshoes" and are included in the design because the house site lacks bedrock and was once a swamp. Even today, the area remains marshy and offers little support for any large structure, yet the Chance House has remained free of any settling problems, thanks to this innovation. Concrete foundations, which were done in one continuous pouring on one day only, rest on these footings. The foundations are moisture proofed by means of the addition of iron dust to prevent seepage through the expansion of rust within the fabric of the concrete. Above, the uprights are placed directly on the 2" x 4" bottom plate which rests on the foundations. They extend upward uninterrupted through the full 18' height of the house.

To further insure stability, a spring system is employed in the walls, which was developed by U.S. Gypsum for the Empire State Building in New York City. With this design, the plaster walls are not attached directly to the studs but to springs which extend horizontally from them. This allows the studs to give and twist with age and temperature changes without cracking the walls. As a result, after nearly 40 years, there are no cracks in the walls or ceilings of the house. The building is capped by a Johns-Manville 5 ply, built-up roof.²

EXTERIOR

The exterior of Chatol is plastered and painted white. Its sweeping horizontality is emphasized by strips of louvered windows in the sun room and the wood and metal framed casement windows which traverse the walls and most of the squared and curved corners of the house.

On the east facade, the velocity of movement begins at ground level in the south sun room, with its broad, louvered windows, and is compressed and slowed suddenly in the strips of narrower casements in the second story of the squared pavilion just south of the main entry. Movement is slowed to almost a standstill to emphasize the entryway, as casements march in single file above. North of the main entrance, velocity increases again as casements race around the curving and squared corners of the north side. Capping this movement across the entire facade, and serving to emphasize it, a 3' ledge edged in stainless steel projects approximately 4.5' below the roof line. In addition, this feature is useful in a practical sense because it protects the stucco walls of the exterior from rainfall.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

CHATOL

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 1

Punctuating the east facade is the squared porte-cochère which is supported by clusters of tubular steel poles. Sheltered beneath, the main entrance to the house, with its double wooden doors edged with rectangular sidelights, trimmed with horizontal steel banding and pierced by porthole windows, is a fine example of Depression Modern design. Located atop a 5-step, cutback, marble stairway, the entryway is surrounded by a series of 5 recessed jambs which not only give visual emphasis to the doorway, but also serve to visually draw the visitor into the house.³

The cubic design of the rear elevation of Chatol is more in tune with the usual concept of the International Style. Differences in the designs of these two facades are due to modifications made in the architect's original design of the east facade by Mr. Chance with the intention of softening the design through the addition of curved surfaces.⁴ The west side lacks the design quality of the east and is highlighted only by the random placement of single, double and triple casement windows. In addition, two glass brick windows, one which serves the first floor kitchen and the other which is located in one of the upstairs baths, are to be found in the center of the facade. The swimming pool, which was originally open but is now enclosed, is located between the north and south cubical pavilions.

INTERIOR

The interior of Chatol, though altered several times and in several ways, retains the character of Depression Modern design in the curving sweep of its walls in the sun room, dining room, living room (conversation room) and kitchen breakfast room on the first floor (see plan). The breakfast room is particularly striking in this respect due to its cutaway, oval ceiling, used for recessed lighting, and its horizontal, silver, wooden banding which makes a pleasing contrast to the pale green of the walls as it surrounds the room. In addition, the concave west wall of the living room features cut-away curving recesses for lighting, curving wooden shelves and large sloping jambs flanking the fireplace. On the east side, the front entrance, which is embellished with steel banding on its exterior, has its horizontality emphasized by contrasting dark wooden strips on its bleached mahogany interior. The original lighting fixtures, which were designed especially for Chatol by the Gross Chandelier Company of St. Louis, Missouri, remain in the house. Their designs range from the starkly modern, such as the glass globe in the entrance hall and the glass and metal cubes in the sun room, to fantasies of Art Deco expression, such as the brass, glass and plastic flowing fountain fixture in the dining room and the Egyptian-inspired lotiform wall sconces in the master bedroom (Anchor Room).⁵ In addition, the asymmetrically curving teakwood bar in the southwest corner of the first floor and the accompanying twin curving projection of the ceiling above reflect the love of curves which characterizes the Depression Modern Style.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

CHATOL

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 2

Additional Notable Features. Many more original features of Chatol survive which can be characterized as decorative, practical and even whimsical. Most striking of the remaining decorative features is the oriental wallpaper which covers the walls of the dining room. It depicts a garden of bamboo and peonies, populated by animated and colorful birds on a background of golden-bronze. The paper, which was intended to cover and decorate Japanese screens, was hand-painted in the Orient, purchased by F. Gano Chance on one of his many trips abroad, and shipped to the U.S. where the design was assembled square by square on the walls of Chatol. Also featured in the dining room is the hand-carved dining room set of Honduras mahogany which includes in its design certain Mayan motives such as the elongated, curving plume and the step pyramid. This furniture was originally carved for and exhibited at the Chicago World's Fair in 1933 and acquired for Chatol afterward.

Around the pool, which is located in the U of the plan, a series of eye splices augment the already rather nautical character of the design of the house. They are not nautical in inspiration, however; their design is a decorative adaptation of the loops from the Never-Creep Anchor, the invention which laid the foundations for the A.B. Chance Company. (see Section #8).

The balustrade of the central stairway which leads from the entrance hall to the second floor was designed by F. Gano Chance of stainless steel with decorative glass vertical members. Its unusual design and stainless steel simplicity echo again the streamlined design craze of America in the 1930's. In the same vein, throughout the house bleached mahogany fixtures, trim and built-ins designed by F. Gano Chance are featured.

In addition to the special features of construction already mentioned, Mr. Chance incorporated several practical features of note into his house. The wrap-around windows, which are such an important feature of the Depression Modern design, were requested by Mrs. Chance in order to admit more light into the house and eliminate dark corners. In connection with this, the heating system of the house incorporates two small furnaces rather than one large apparatus. There are two thermostats for more efficient heating, one for the usually warmer south side of the house and one for the north side. In addition, four large attic fans, which are located in pairs on the roof and are visible in the aerial photograph, were originally the only provision for summer cooling and were quite effective.

In the kitchen, small niches with swinging doors are built into the walls around the countertops to enclose various appliances, such as the toaster, blender and mixer, which usually clutter such an area. Finally, the house is equipped throughout with an interior-exterior communications system and is completely protected by burglar and fire alarm systems.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

CHATOL

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 3

A whimsical side of the personality of Mr. Chance is revealed in the final design innovation of his house, the simulated thundershower. In the late 1920's, while dining in the Tonga Room, a restaurant in San Francisco, California, Mr. and Mrs. Chance were impressed by a simulated thundershower which occurred there as part of the exotic decor. With this in mind, through the imaginative use of exterior lights, a unique water system and the recorded sounds of a thunderstorm, Mr. Chance created his own. When in operation, lightning flashes, thunder roars and rain beats on the window panes, creating a believable thunderstorm for those within.⁶

ALTERATIONS

Alterations in use are more significant in the history of Chatol than are alterations in structure. Many rooms on the second floor which originally served as the nursery, sewing room, health room, weather forecasting room and servant's quarters have been altered minimally and baths have been added to create the many suites of bedrooms needed for the present role of Chatol as the A.B. Chance Company Guest House. Previous to this, the kitchen and most of the bathrooms were remodeled in 1960. The only exception is the master bath (Anchor Room bath) which still retains its original streamlined porcelain and stainless steel fixtures. On the first floor, a small grilled window was originally the only link between the sun room and the living room (conversation room), and the bar room was accessible through an opening through its south wall. At an unknown date, the situation was reversed; now the sun room is entered from the conversation room through an opening and a grilled window is located between the conversation room and the bar room.

The pool, which originally was an exterior feature, was enclosed at an unknown date. Due to humidity problems created by the water system for the pool, plans are afoot to fill it in and make the area a large patio. Downstairs, in the southwest corner of the basement, a room which was constructed as a storm shelter was reinforced, refurbished and supplied as a bomb shelter during the 1950's. At the northwest extreme of the house, the garage was remodeled when Chatol became a Guest House to provide an apartment for the manager.

SITE

Chatol is located on a wooded, spacious corner lot in a residential neighborhood near the outskirts of Centralia in central Missouri. It is approached by a wide drive which loops beneath the porte-cochère, forms a circle and terminates in a parking lot at the northern extreme of the property. Bordering the drive are small, low, round lighting fixtures, ornamented with steel banding, which imitate

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

CHATOL

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 4

the Depression Modern design of the house. Though the grounds once included an orchard, a garden, a steam-heated dog kennel, a tea house and a fish pond, all of these features have been eliminated.⁸ Three original features do remain, however, in the oval barbeque pavilion to the southwest with its stepped roof, tubular steel supports and accompanying oval patio, the pit barbeque south of this and the weather tower of Mr. Chance by means of which he made his accurate predictions of the weather, also located to the southwest.

PRESENT STATUS AND CONDITION

Chatol is in excellent condition, except for the humidity problems in the area of the pool and the basement beneath it as mentioned above. It is under constant care in its current role as the Guest House for the A.B. Chance Company. The present owners are sensitive to the architectural integrity of the house and, except for the minimal alterations mentioned above which are proposed for the future, the house will remain in its present form.

FOOTNOTES

1. Depression Modern is a peculiarly American expression of the International Style and has been described in Martin Greif, Depression Modern: The Thirties Style in America (New York: Universe Books, 1975). It is defined and discussed in Section #8, note #2.
2. Mr. & Mrs. F. Gano Chance, personal interview with the Office of Historic Preservation, Department of Natural Resources, September 6, 1978. This interview provided the structural information in this report.
3. This feature is similar in its effect to recessed doorways found on Romanesque and Gothic Cathedrals where the jamb sculpture and the ever narrowing doorway served to draw worshipers into the church.
4. Perhaps this amendment of the original design scheme by Mr. Chance, a designer and engineer in his own right, could be used to support Greif's argument that there was something which mirrored the American spirit reflected in the streamlined curves of the Depression Modern Style. See Martin Greif, Depression Modern, pp. 33-40.
5. The names of the second floor bedrooms refer to specific inventions, discoveries or branches of research and development of the A.B. Chance Company. The Anchor Room is named after the Never-Creep Anchor for telephone poles, the invention which formed the basis of the A.B. Chance Manufacturing Company.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

CHATOL

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 5

6. Mr. Chance used this many times to fool his friends. Since he was well known for his expertise at weather forecasting, one of his many hobbies, he liked to predict the exact hour and minute of thunderstorm activity for his guests, and, of course, he was never mistaken.

7. This area will be restored to its original condition in the near future.

8. "Centralia to Have House That is Almost Human", Kansas City [Missouri] Star, June 24, 1939.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW				
PREHISTORIC	__ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	__COMMUNITY PLANNING	__LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	__RELIGION	
1400-1499	__ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	__CONSERVATION	__LAW	__SCIENCE	
1500-1599	__AGRICULTURE	__ECONOMICS	__LITERATURE	__SCULPTURE	
1600-1699	XARCHITECTURE	__EDUCATION	__MILITARY	__SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN	
1700-1799	__ART	__ENGINEERING	__MUSIC	__THEATER	
1800-1899	__COMMERCE	__EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	__PHILOSOPHY	__TRANSPORTATION	
1900-	__COMMUNICATIONS	XINDUSTRY	XPOLITICS/GOVERNMENT	__OTHER (SPECIFY)	
		XINVENTION			

SPECIFIC DATES 1940 BUILDER/ARCHITECT Sam Bihr, F. Gano Chance

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Chatol¹, the F. Gano Chance House, in Centralia, Missouri, is significant as the home of F. Gano Chance, former President and Chairman of the Board of the A.B. Chance Manufacturing Company. This internationally known company, which is based in Centralia, Missouri, has been responsible for several important developments in telephone and industrial technology. On an architectural plane, in spite of its youth, Chatol is remarkable in its central Missouri locale and is one of only ~~four~~ *a few* known examples of International Style-Depression Modern domestic architecture in the entire state.²

John A. Chance, the grandfather of F. Gano Chance, was born in Illinois in 1849. As a young man he moved to Centralia, Missouri and purchased a large farm north of town.³ In addition to his farming activities, Mr. Chance operated a store and the Merchant's Hotel in town.⁴

Albert Bishop Chance, John's son, was born in Centralia on May 26, 1873. As a boy, he was known as a tinkerer. He fathered many inventions and worked at the local Globe Hotel. In 1896 John and Albert Chance began installing the first telephone system in town. The main switchboard was located downtown, over O.G. Williams' Drugstore and the company was called the Centralia Telephone Company. In 1898 the Chance team built the first telephone exchange in Macon, Missouri and sold it to Theodore Gary who was on his way toward becoming a local telephone tycoon.⁵ Through this period A.B. Chance was a stockholder in the company and a line repairman.⁶ In 1900 Mr. John Chance and his son strung the first telephone line between Centralia and Columbia. The company, which later became known as the Home Telephone Company, was sold by the Chance family in 1926. John Chance died in 1934.⁸

A.B. Chance, who had received local renown as a boy inventor, continued in the telephone business he had helped to build with his father until it was sold in 1926. Yet, he had additional interests as well. In 1907, in order to give form to his many inventions, A.B. Chance started a small manufacturing company in Centralia which was the basis for the future A.B. Chance Company.⁹ In addition, in 1910 he served as Mayor of his home town.¹⁰

In 1912, a particularly severe winter sleet storm provided the opportunity for A.B. Chance to become remembered in the history of modern technology. The storm toppled telephone poles and blew down telegraph lines all across central Missouri, many

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

CHATOL

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 1

miles of which Mr. Chance had strung himself. To remedy the situation and keep his poles up in future storms, Mr. Chance invented the Never-Creep Anchor for telephone poles.¹¹ The eventual world-wide success of this product and others of its type became the basis for the future development of the A.B. Chance Manufacturing Company in Centralia, Missouri.¹²

The little company grew steadily through the 1920's. A foundry was added in the middle of the decade, soon after the Chance Company entered the automotive supply business, first with piston rings, and later with a line of chemical products such as polishes and radiator sealers.¹³

The company was hit hard by the Depression. In 1929, for example, its sales totaled about \$700,000, but by 1932 the total had dropped to \$195,000. Due to frugal business practices and wise borrowing, however, not one of the company's employees was laid off, though some work weeks were very short.¹⁴ Throughout this crisis, A.B. Chance proved himself to be a generous man who personally helped his employees out with gifts of money and food, establishing patterns of intimate relations between the plant and the community which was to characterize the A.B. Chance Company in later years.¹⁵

The decades from the Depression to the 1970's saw the expansion of the A.B. Chance Company in size, diversification of utility product lines and intensification of its role in the national economy.¹⁶ In 1932 the company incorporated, and for the first time stock was sold outside of the family. In 1934 the company made its first acquisition, the Wej-Lok Anchor Company of Winterset, Iowa. In 1937 the Tips Tool Company of Taylorville, Illinois, manufacturer of "hot line" tools which enable linemen to work on power lines without cutting the power, was acquired. Today most of the world's hot line equipment comes from Centralia, Missouri.

During World War II the Chance Company made airplane parts at first. As the war progressed, however, and the advancing Allied Forces needed equipment to rebuild power and communication lines, the company gradually reverted to the manufacture of its own anchors, lance poles, cable chairs and other products for the Signal Corps.

With the War's end came the decision to concentrate the efforts of the company in the utilities business. An ambitious expansion program followed with more acquisitions, additions to the engineering staff, entry into the export field with the formation of a Canadian subsidiary and the establishment of a small export sales department which has grown into the company's present International Division. In 1945, the Bonnie Switch Company of San Francisco was acquired and in 1948, the large Baily Electrical Complex on the West Coast was added.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

CHATOL

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 2

The 1950's were characterized by a further expansion of staff and test facilities. Acquisitions continued, however, with the W.H. Matthews Corporation of St. Louis and the Specialty Device Company of Cincinnati, both in 1953. In 1955 the Chance Company acquired the Seyler Company of Pittsburgh, a manufacturer of pole hardware.

In 1961 the Pitman Manufacturing Company of Grandview, Missouri, a fabricator of hydraulically powered equipment, was acquired. The same year a modern, engineering research center in Centralia was completed equipped to proof-test new products and product improvements. Today it is one of the most complete electro-mechanical facilities of its type in the world. The Union Pole Bracket Company, a maker of steel poles, was acquired in 1967 and the acquisition of the Cortran Manufacturing Company and the Washington Electrical Products Company in Washington, Missouri in 1968 gave the Chance Company a foothold in the \$400,000,000-a-year transformer industry.

In addition to the Never-Creep Anchor, one of the major developments made by Chance Company research was Epoxiglas plastic insulation for hot line tools manufactured from plastic foam, fiberglass and epoxy resin. The process for the fabrication of this product is patented, and its development was a major reason for the success of the company after World War II. This success enabled the sales of the company to grow from \$4,000,000 in 1946 to the \$70,000,000+ level in 1969.

In 1974-1975 the Chance Company changed its role and was itself acquired by the Emerson Electric Company of St. Louis,¹⁷ yet it remains today one of the most important industries in central Missouri and the hub of activity in Centralia. In addition to its 1,500 employees in four Missouri cities, it employs over 1,000 more in other operations in California, Oregon, Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Texas and its Mexican and Canadian subsidiaries.

F. Gano Chance, the son of A.B. Chance who was named after his mother, Frances Gano of Kansas City, graduated from the University of Missouri in 1929 with degrees in Liberal Arts and Chemical Engineering. In 1932, at the incorporation of the company, he was made its Vice President. In 1939, A.B. Chance became Chairman of the Board and F. Gano was made President. Mr. Chance has built an impressive public service record in his home town through his activities on the school board and in various church and civic organizations. In addition, he is the past President of the Missouri State Chamber of Commerce and of the Associated Industries of Missouri, and he received an Honor Medal for Distinguished Service in Engineering from his alma mater.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

CHATOL

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 3

The politics of Mr. Chance have been the subject of some interest both locally and nationally. By 1966, he was on the National Council of the John Birch Society. He and the A.B. Chance Company were credited as a significant influence in the growth and development of the John Birch movement in Missouri in the early 1960's.¹⁸

The idealism and conservative politics of Mr. Chance have been made manifest in several aspects of the life of the Chance Company and in the writings of Mr. Chance himself. His personality, which is characterized by the same rugged individualism which enabled his father to become a notable success, has been often offended by the growth of government control in industry and the accompanying decline of personal initiative. He has been a booster for his company and has stressed the importance of "the group" and its welfare to such an extent that he was once criticized for it.¹⁹ Today Mr. Chance lives comfortably with his wife in Centralia, Missouri. Now retired, he is an avid photographer and world traveler, and he is still active in the affairs of his company.

Considering the conservative politics of Mr. Chance, it seems at first surprising that he should choose one of the most advanced and non-traditional styles of architecture current at the time for the construction of his home. Actually, Mr. Chance is an engineer with innovative ideas, many of which are seen in the structural characteristics and technological advances in the house which have already been discussed. His utilization of this contemporary style as a backdrop for his practical engineering ideas is not surprising because by 1939 the International Style was well established in the United States after its development in Europe in the 1920's.²⁰ Moreover, the Depression Modern American manifestation of this style had been well established in the 1930's by designers such as William Lescaze, Russell Wright and Raymond Loewy. It had so permeated all levels of American culture that it was clearly visible in everything from the streamlined curves of vacuum cleaners to the fantasy of cinema set design.²¹ In fact, the use of this style for the design of the Chance House had more to do with practicality and the love of Mrs. Chance for the simple lines of contemporary furniture and oriental art than to the current philosophy of architecture.²²

Even though within educated architectural circles, the Depression Modern Style had gained some measure of acceptance by 1939, its appearance in a small, rural, conservative, midwestern town is surprising. Only ^{a few} three additional examples of the International or Depression Modern Style in domestic architecture are known to exist in the state of Missouri:²³ #7 Warson Terrace in St. Louis County, the Emil J. Roher Residence, 4425 Terrace Street (1938) and the Walter E. Bixby Residence, 6505 State Line Road (1935-1937), both in Kansas City. All of these have been termed International Style by commentators, though the Bixby House

Three notable ones are

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

CHATOL

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 4

exhibits the angles, curves and streamlining characteristic of the Depression Modern Style. These homes, together with the Chance House, form a chapter in the history of the architecture of Missouri which has not been fully appreciated to date.

The survey of Missouri's historic sites is based on their selection as they relate to theme studies in Missouri history as outlined in "Missouri's State Historic Preservation Plan". The F. Gano Chance House, therefore, is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places as an example of the themes of "Architecture and "Technology".

FOOTNOTES

1. This name is formed from syllables from the names Chance and Toalson. The latter is Mrs. Chance's maiden name.
2. Based on information in the files of the Office of Historic Preservation, Department of Natural Resources. The Depression Modern Style has been defined in Depression Modern: The Thirties Style in America by Martin Greif, though the exact differences which Mr. Greif sees between it and the International Style have not been made perfectly clear. According to Greif, Depression Modern is an American phenomenon growing out of the Depression culture of the 1930's which is characterized by streamlined, simple, spare surfaces, often curved and sometimes ornamented with three simple running lines, grooves, etc. which serve to emphasize visual movement in structure and horizontality. Ornamentation is never employed as its own end, as in the previous Art Deco movement and its American manifestation, the Moderne. The objectives of Depression Modern are efficiency, economy and right appearance in direct antithesis to the luxury and ostentation of the earlier styles. In addition, this style was not only employed in architecture, but it permeated every aspect of design in America by the end of the decade, from furniture to the automobile, and from plumbing to the telephone. See Martin Greif, Depression Modern: The Thirties Style in America (New York: Universe Books, 1975), pp. 16-17, 30-31, 35-36, 40 and 44.
3. Edgar Rodemyre, History of Centralia, Missouri (Centralia: Fireside Guard, 1936), p. 305.
4. Missouri, Mother of the West, Volume III, (Chicago: American Historical Society, Inc., 1930), p. 149.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

CHATOL

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 5

5. Theodore Gary is notable as the developer of the telephone industry in Missouri and Kansas. He was born in 1854 in Ohio and moved to Macon, Missouri in 1876. He was employed first as a lightening rod installer and then later became a successful banker and real estate speculator. In 1899 he purchased the local exchange from the Chance family. In his later years he was responsible for the organization of many independent exchanges in Topeka, Kansas; Nevada, Missouri; and Joplin, Missouri. He utilized his real estate assets as investments in his phone companies and developed independent exchanges because he had no confidence in large trusts. General History of Macon County (Chicago: Henry Taylor and Co., 1910), pp. 351-355.
6. Missouri, Mother of the West, Volume III, p. 150.
7. Bill Vaughan, "Serving America's Lifeline", Chicago News (June, 1957), p. 5.
8. F. Gano Chance, The Ideas That Guide Us (New York: Newcomen Society, 1968), n.p. and General History of Centralia, Missouri, p. 305.
9. Centralia, Missouri Centennial, 1857-1957 (Centralia: Guard Printing and Publishing Co., 1957), p. 63.
10. Bill Vaughan, "Serving America's Lifeline", p. 7.
11. Ibid., p. 6. The anchor employed an ever-so-simple principle for providing maximum stability without necessitating a great deal of digging in frozen ground. A small hole was dug in the ground near the pole to be stabilized and at a 45° angle to it. A log, and later on as technology advanced, a heavy metal post, was inserted in the hole to a specified depth. A metal rod was bored through the ground over the log and through the log, at right angles to it. Then the hole was filled in so that the log was securely buried. Finally, a guide wire was strung from the top of the telephone pole to a loop on the rod at ground level, securing the pole.
12. F. Gano Chance, The Ideas That Guide Us, n.p.
13. "A.B. Chance Serves the World", Chanco News (April, 1970), p. 9.
14. Ibid.
15. Bill Vaughan, "Serving America's Lifeline", p. 10. One manifestation of this policy is the company's profit sharing plan which was instituted in 1939. It is in the form of a savings and profit sharing trust fund to which both employees and

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

CHATOL

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8

PAGE 6

15. the company contribute in order to build employees retirement savings. At the end of the first year the fund totalled \$8,000. Thirty years later it had topped the \$9,000,000 level. Charter members still active have accounts in the \$50,000 to \$100,000 range.
16. The following history of the development of the Chance Company is taken from F. Gano Chance, The Ideas That Guide Us, n.p. and Bill Vaughan, "Serving America's Lifeline", p. 10.
17. A.B. Chance Company, Annual Report (Centralia: A.B. Chance Company, 1974), p. 2.
18. J. Allen Broyles, The John Birch Society: Anatomy of a Protest (Boston: Beacon Press, 1964), p. 49 and Benjamine R. Epstein and Arnold Forster, Report on the John Birch Society, 1966 (New York: Random House, 1966), p. 87.
19. He himself wrote of this problem at the end of his book, The Ideas That Guide Us. And it is true that a careful reading of the Chanco News, the official publication of the company which began publication early in its history, does give the impression that the company was anxious to have a part in many facets of a worker's life. For example, in 1943, to prevent absenteeism and also presumably for the general welfare of the workers, cold drugs were provided en masse for any who chose to take them. In addition, the company liked to foster its own image and encourage group activities which would give a sense of identity to the workers. During a particularly tough bout with absenteeism in 1944 a contest was organized whereby each contestant would complete the phrase "I like working for the A.B. Chance Company because..." For a more complete explanation of the philosophy of Mr. Chance see F. Gano Chance, Shades of Red (Centralia: A.B. Chance Co., n.d.), "Cold Capsule Distribution to Begin", Chanco News, (September, 1943), p. 3, "Absenteeism Problem", Chanco News (March, 1944), p. 3.
20. Marcus Whiffen, American Architecture Since 1780: A Guide to the Styles (Cambridge: The M.I.T. Press, 1969), pp. 241-246.
21. This can be seen clearly on the plates from Mr. Greif's book. For this discussion of the Chance House, an interesting comparison has been drawn in David Soren, The Rise and Fall of the Horror Film: An Art Historical Approach to Fantasy Cinema (Columbia: Lucas Brothers Publishers, 1977), Figs. 18a and 18b, between the architecture of the B.J. Kahn House in Lake Forest, Illinois, a house which bears a remarkable resemblance to the Chance House, and the set design for the lamisary of Shangri-La by Stephen Goosen from the film Lost Horizons (1937).

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

CHATOL

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 7

22. Mr. and Mrs. F. Gano Chance, personal interview with the Office of Historic Preservation, Department of Natural Resources, September 6, 1978. It is interesting to speculate that this spare, streamlined, efficient design is a result of the frugal, practical and efficient nature of Mr. Chance since he had such a great role in its execution. In fact, he has stated that the only reason he employed an architect at all was to keep him from making too many mistakes. Unfortunately, virtually nothing is known of the architect, Sam W. Bihr, except his signature on the original plans for the Chance House. Little is known of his stay in Kansas City except that his office was located at 912 Baltimore Avenue. He was evidently not a member of the A.I.A. in that city. Mr. Chance became aware of him from his brother who worked at the time at the now defunct Miller Shoe Store in Columbia, Missouri. American Institute of Architects, Kansas City Chapter, telephone conversation with the Office of Historic Preservation, Department of Natural Resources, November 22, 1978, Linda Whelan, "Grand Style of Hospitality", Columbia [Missouri] Missourian, October 19, 1975, Polk's Kansas City Directory (Kansas City: Gate City Directory Co., 1939), p. 99.

23. For information on the Roher and Bixby Houses see Kansas City: A Place in Time (Kansas City: Landmarks Commission of Kansas City, Missouri, 1977.) The house in St. Louis County is known personally to this writer. There are, however, many commercial examples of this style known in the state, though none of their owners have expressed interest in obtaining National Register status.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

1. "A.B. Chance Serves the World", Chanco News (April, 1970), 7-13.
2. "Absenteeism Problem", Chanco News (March, 1944), p. 3.
3. Centralia, Missouri Centennial, 1857-1957. Centralia: Guard Printing and Publishing Co., 1957.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY approximately 4.1 acres (178,675 square feet)

QUADRANGLE NAME "Centralia, Mo."

QUADRANGLE SCALE 1:24,000

UTM REFERENCES

A 115 574698 4339645

B

ZONE EASTING NORTHING

ZONE EASTING NORTHING

C

D

E

F

G

H

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The South 437.5 feet of Lots One (1), Two (2), Three (3), Four (4) and Five (5) and the South 437.5 feet of the East 62 5/7 feet of Lot Six (6), all in SIM'S ADDITION to Centralia, Boone County, Missouri, being further described as follows, viz:

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE

CODE

COUNTY

CODE

STATE

CODE

COUNTY

CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Noelle Soren, Architectural Historian

ORGANIZATION

Department of Natural Resources

DATE

Office of Historic Preservation

314/751-4096

STREET & NUMBER

TELEPHONE

P.O. Box 176

CITY OR TOWN

STATE

Jefferson City

Missouri 65102

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

TITLE

Director, Department of Natural Resources and
State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

ATTEST:

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

CHIEF OF REGISTRATION

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

CHATOL

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 9 PAGE 1

4. "Centralia to Have House That is Almost Human", Kansas City [Missouri] Star, June 24, 1939.
5. Chance, F. Gano. Shades of Red. Centralia: A.B. Chance Co., n.d.
6. ----- . The Ideas That Guide Us. New York: Newcomen Society, 1968.
7. Chance, Mr. and Mrs. F. Gano. Personal interview with the Office of Historic Preservation, Department of Natural Resources, September 6, 1978.
8. "Cold Capsule Distribution to Begin", Chanco News (September, 1943), 3.
9. Epstein, Benjamine R. and Forster, Arnold. Report on the John Birch Society, 1966 New York: Random House, 1966.
10. General History of Macon County. Chicago: Henry Taylor and Co., 1910.
11. Greif, Martin. Depression Modern: The Thirties Style in America. New York: Universe Books, 1975.
12. Kansas City: A Place in Time. Kansas City: Landmarks Commission of Kansas City, Missouri, 1977.
13. Missouri, Mother of the West, 3 Volumes. Chicago: American Historical Society, Inc., 1930.
14. Rodemyre, Edgar. History of Centralia, Missouri. Centralia: Fireside Guard, 193
15. Soren, David. The Rise and Fall of the Horror Film: An Art Historical Approach to Fantasy Cinema. Columbia: Lucas Brothers Publishers, 1977.
16. Vaughan, Bill. "Serving America's Lifeline", Chanco News (June, 1957), 1-15.
17. Whelan, Linda. "Grand Style of Hospitality", Columbia [Missouri] Missourian, October 19, 1975.
18. Whiffen, Marcus. American Architecture Since 1780: A Guide to the Styles. Cambridge: M.I.T. Press, 1969.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

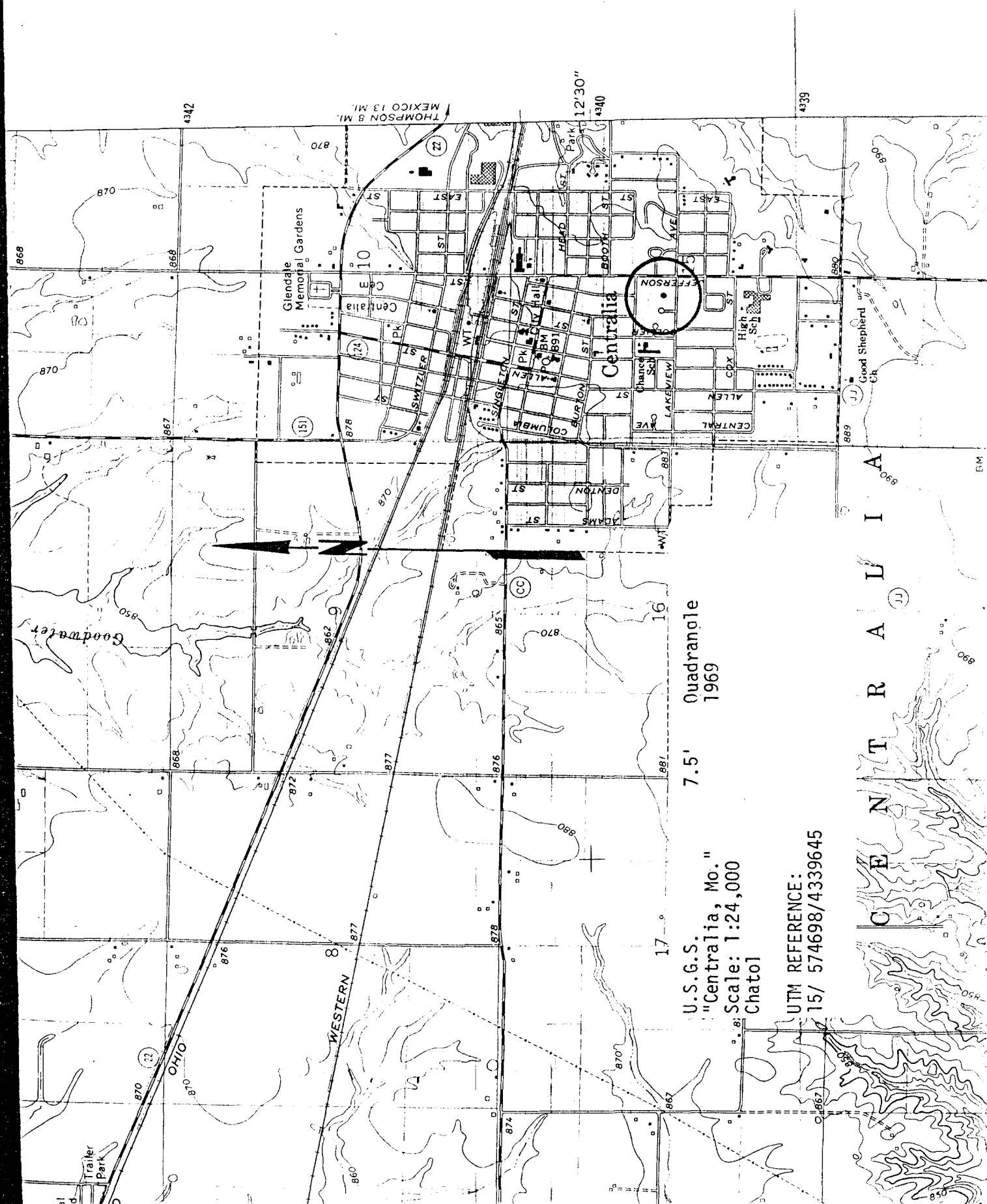
**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

CHATOL

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 10 PAGE 1

Commencing at the center of Section Fifteen (15), Township Fifty-one (51), Range Eleven (11) in Centralia, Boone County, Missouri, thence West 20 feet to the point and corner of beginning (same being the Southeast corner of Lot 1 in said Sim's Addition); thence North along the East line of Lot 1 in Sim's Addition a distance of 437.5 feet; thence West a distance of 408 $\frac{3}{7}$ feet to a point that is 6 $\frac{3}{7}$ feet East of the West line of Lot 6 in Sim's Addition; thence South 437.5 feet to a point on the North right-of-way line of Lakeview Avenue in Centralia, Missouri, that is 6 $\frac{3}{7}$ feet East of the West line of Lot 6 in Sim's Addition; thence East along the North right-of-way line of Lakeview Avenue and the South line of Sim's Addition to the point and corner of beginning.



7.5' Quadrangle
1969

U.S.G.S.
"Centralia, Mo."
Scale: 1:24,000
Chatol

UTM REFERENCE:
15/ 574698/4339645

C E N T R A L I A

THOMPSON 8 MI.
MEXICO 13 MI.

12'30"

4339

4342

OHIO

WESTERN

Trailer
Park

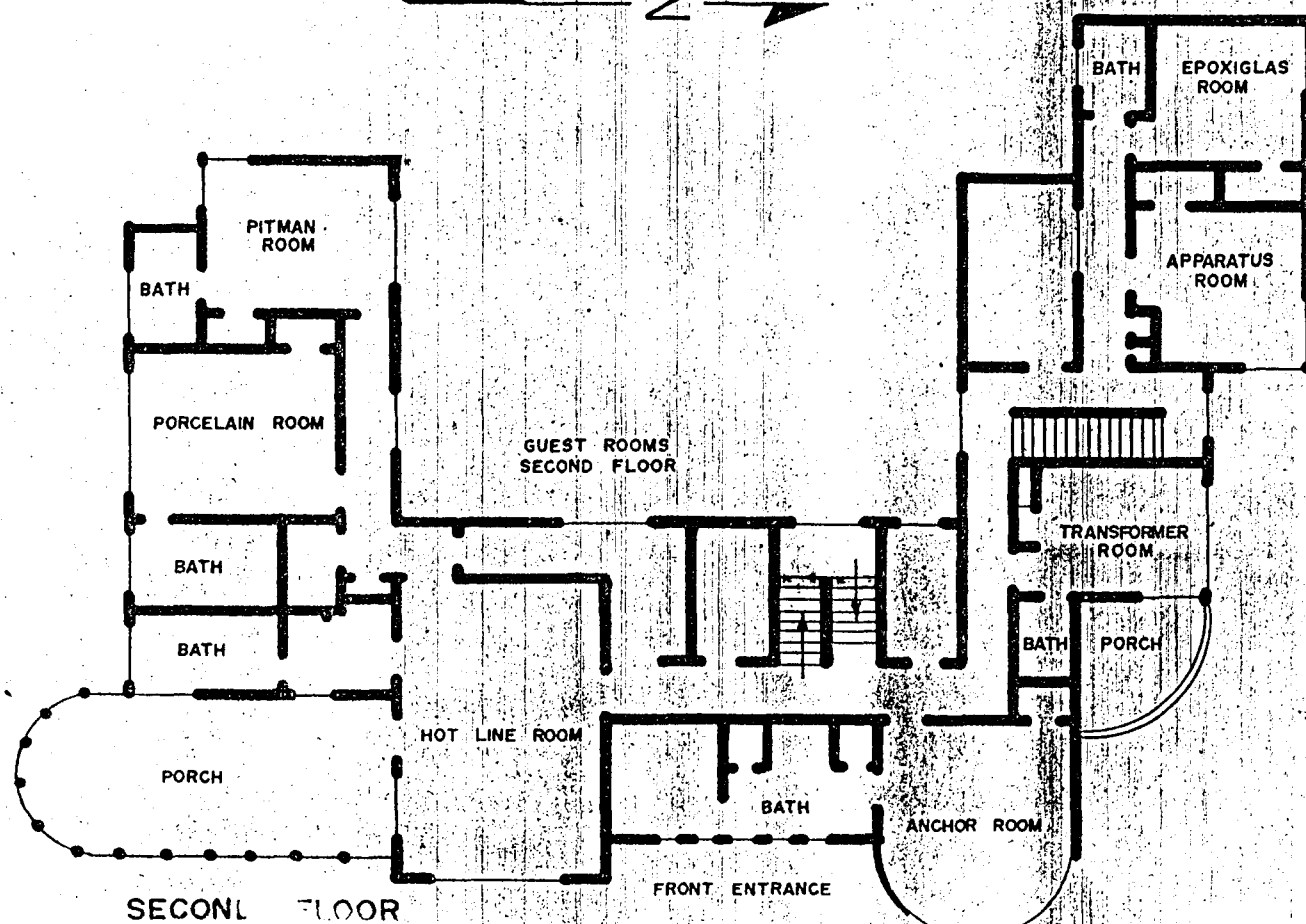
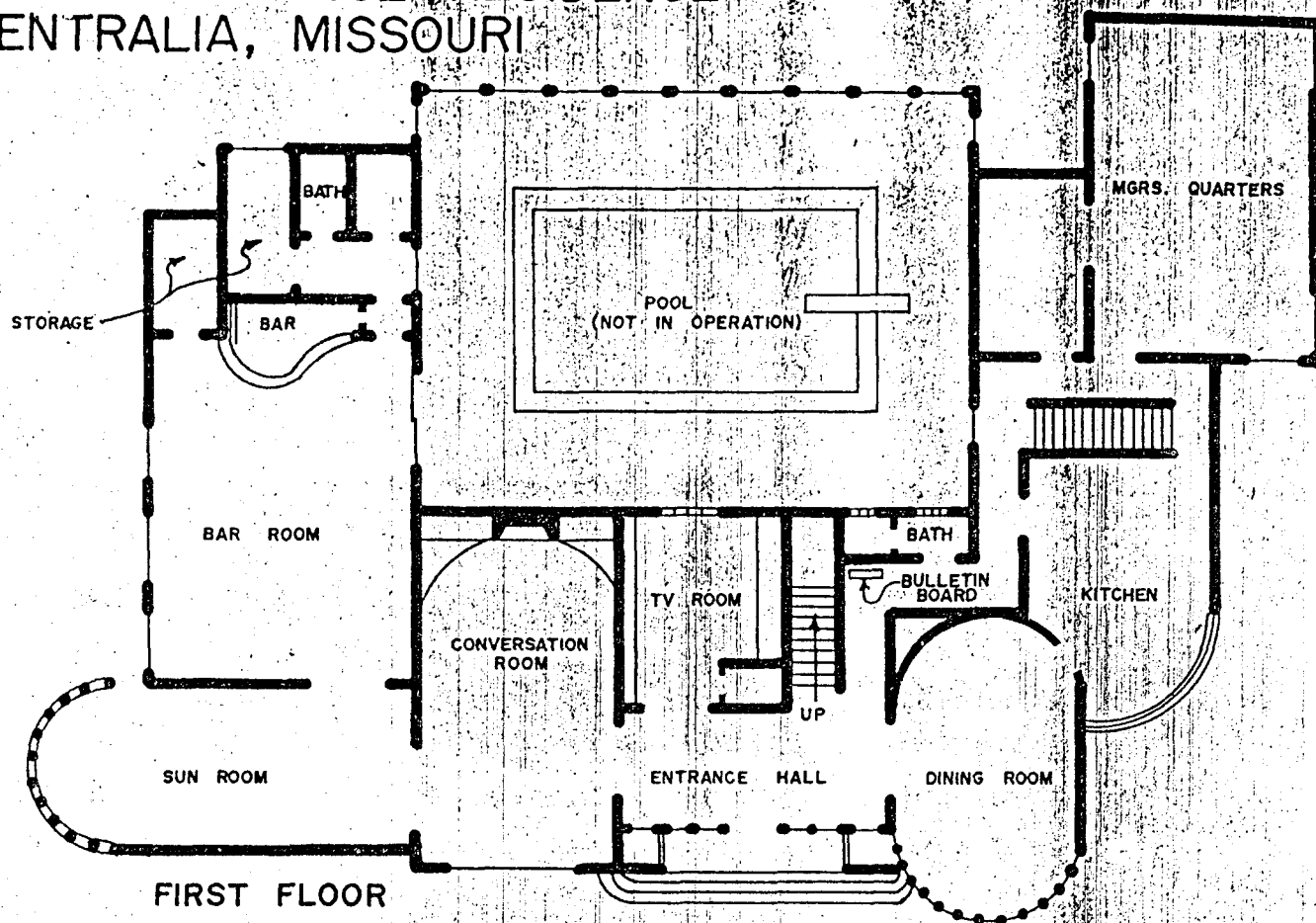
Glendale
Memorial Gardens

Centralia

Good Shepherd
Ch

Goodwater

F. GANO CHANCE RESIDENCE CENTRALIA, MISSOURI



CHATOL (CHANCE, F. GANO, HOUSE)

#364

COUNTY:

Boone

LOCATION:

543 South Jefferson St.
Centralia

OWNER:

A.B. Chance Co.

ADDRESS:

210 North Allen
Centralia

DATE APPROVED BY A.C.:

January 25, 1979

DATE SENT TO D.C.:

February 16, 1979

DATE OF RECEIPT IN D.C.:

February 27, 1979

DATE PLACED ON NATIONAL REGISTER:

April 20, 1979

DATE CERTIFICATE AWARDED
(AND PRESENTOR):

DATE FILE REVIEWED:







